

STATE ADMINISTRATION

Exhibit No. 4
Date 2-14-07
Bill No. SR-5

Keebler, Patti

From: Brenda Schye [schye@nemontel.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 01, 2007 11:00 AM
To: Keebler, Patti
Subject: background for Board of Nursing appointment

Dear Patti-

I understand that someone has raised question about my qualifications to serve on the Montana Board of Nursing. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with some of my background that I believe to be relevant to my responsibilities as a member of this board.

I am a native of the state, having been raised in a farming family in Northeast Montana. I have BA in education from the University of Montana, with majors in business and psychology. My first job out of college was with the Chinook school system, where I was a classroom teacher and director of the federal Title I program. My husband and I then moved to Glasgow, where we farmed and I became the executive director of Hi Line Home Programs, an early intervention program for handicapped children. While in this position, I became active in political advocacy on behalf of services for the developmentally disabled. At this time, I also began serving on numerous volunteer boards, including the state board of the Montana Mental Health Association.

In the 1980's, I received an award from the western states Regional Library Association for my legislative advocacy on behalf of libraries. I then began working for the Eastern Montana Mental Health Center, where I was team supervisor for a therapeutic foster care program. During the administration of Governor Racicot, I was appointed to the state advisory council for the Department of Family Services. I still serve on this board, though following a reorganization, it is now the state advisory council to the Child and Family Services Division of DPHHS. We advise this Division regarding state programs intended to keep children safe and families strong.

In the 1990's, I was elected to the board of trustees of Frances Mahon Deaconess Hospital in Glasgow. I served about 12 years on this board, including two terms as board president. I was elected by my peers as the chairperson of the Health Care Trustees Association of Montana. I was also elected by MHA members to the governing board of the Montana Hospital Association, where I served as the only hospital trustee (the remainder of the board being hospital administrators). In addition, I served as a trustee of the Montana Health Research and Education Foundation, which administered the national demonstration project for Medical Assistance Facilities (MAF's), the forerunner to today's Critical Access Hospitals. In 2002, I was selected as the Montana Health Care Trustee of the year from among all of the hospital and nursing home boards in the state. I have testified before Montana House and Senate committees regarding legislation and funding for health care programs in Montana, as well as matters concerning state and private agencies that provide services for abused or neglected children. My hospital and its board of trustees was involved in the establishment of the Montana Family Practice Residency Program in Montana, and legislative records will show that I have given testimony in the Montana Senate on behalf of this program.

I served two terms on the 20-member Small and Rural Governing Council of the American Hospital Association, once again serving as the lone trustee among hospital administrators. During my tenure in this volunteer position, I traveled to Washington DC numerous times to meet with our congressional delegation and advocate for issues of importance to rural health care, including the Nurse Reinvestment Act to improve recruitment and retention of nurses. Last September, I met with staff in the Washington offices of Representative Rehberg and Senators Baucus and Burns to discuss health care legislation.

In the 1990's, I was co-founder and volunteer advocate for a domestic violence program that now serves multiple counties of Northeast Montana. I authored the Articles of Incorporation and the successful application to the IRS for 501-c3 non-profit status for this organization, all on a volunteer basis.

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I served as a public member of the Board of Psychologists during the 1980's, so serving on the Board of Nursing is a role that is familiar to me. I bring to the Board a knowledge of the challenges facing the health care field in Montana and the nation. I am well acquainted with factors that impact our ability to meet the health care needs of our state, including the roles and responsibilities of private citizens and elected officials.

I believe that nursing excellence is key to providing high quality health care, and as a hospital trustee, I have always championed the philosophy that the fiduciary duty of hospital trustees requires that we monitor quality indicators as closely as financial indicators. The fact that our hospital board places a high value on nursing excellence has been reflected in the fact that our hospital consistently receives outstanding patient satisfaction ratings for our nursing care. Nevertheless, I believe there is more that can be done to elevate the standards for the nursing profession in Montana, and I look forward to working with nurses, health care facilities, and state government to work for continuous improvement in the nursing field.

So far, I have participated in three full-board meetings of the Board of Nursing, as well as numerous committee meetings. I would invite you to ask any of the longer-serving members of the board for their opinions as to whether I function as an effective public member.

Sincerely,

Brenda Schye